(c) The death-cases as per latest available data, decreased in 1998 as compared to the previous years.

Shortage of doctors and staff in hospitals

†52. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in almost all the hospitals including AIIMS, patients have to suffer as a result of shortage of doctors and other staff;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government have taken to fill up the said vacant posts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The filling up of the vacant posts of doctors and staff in Central Government Hospitals is a continuous process. In AIIMS consequent upon the judgement of the court, the vacant posts of Assistant Professors have been advertised for making regular appointments.

Inadequate medical facilities in rural and hilly areas

53. SHRI S.S. CHANDRAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the inadequate medical facilities available in rural areas especially in forest and hilly areas where most of the people are below the poverty line;

(b) if so, whehter there is any proposal to financially assist the State Governments for setting up of dispensaries in these areas in order to provide proper medical facilities;

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the financial allocation; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Yes, Sir. It is a fact that in several States there is a shortage of health facilities against the laid down norms

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.